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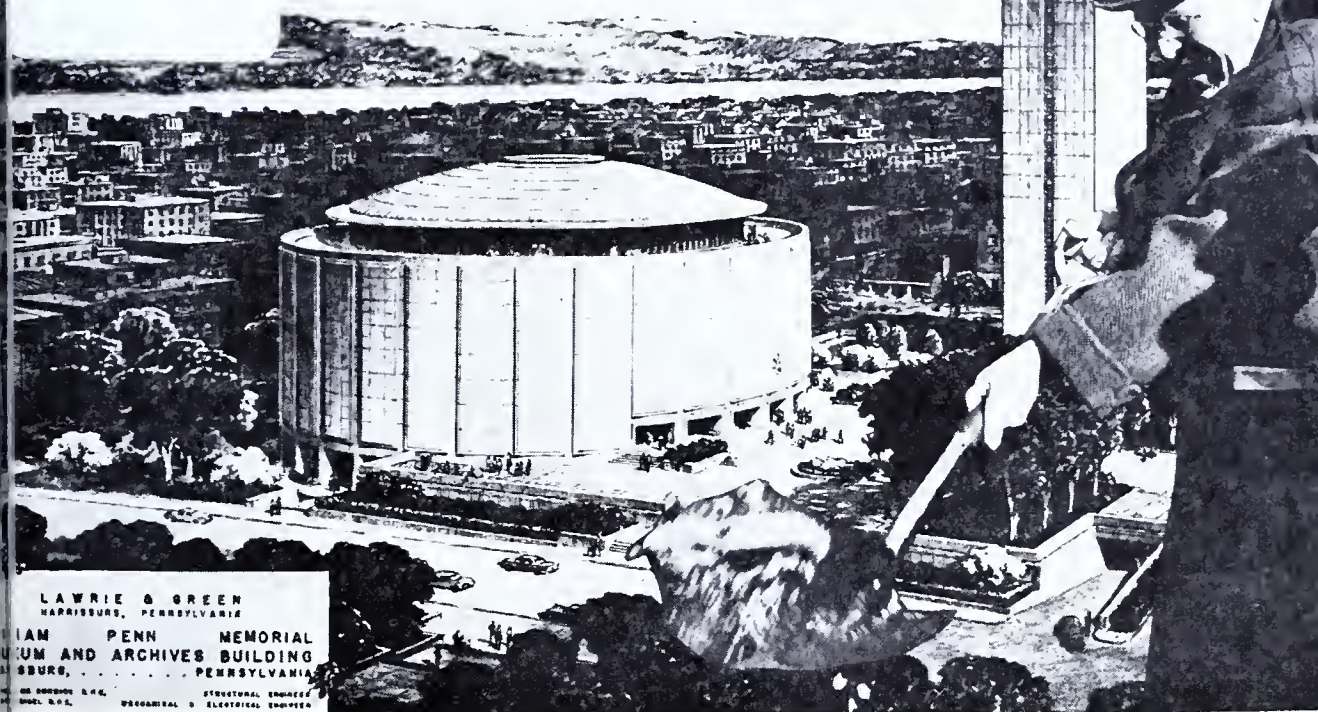
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Pennsylvania Historical and
Museum Commission

BREAKING GROUND FOR THE
WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL
1962

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Breaking Ground

for the

WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
Harrisburg, 1962

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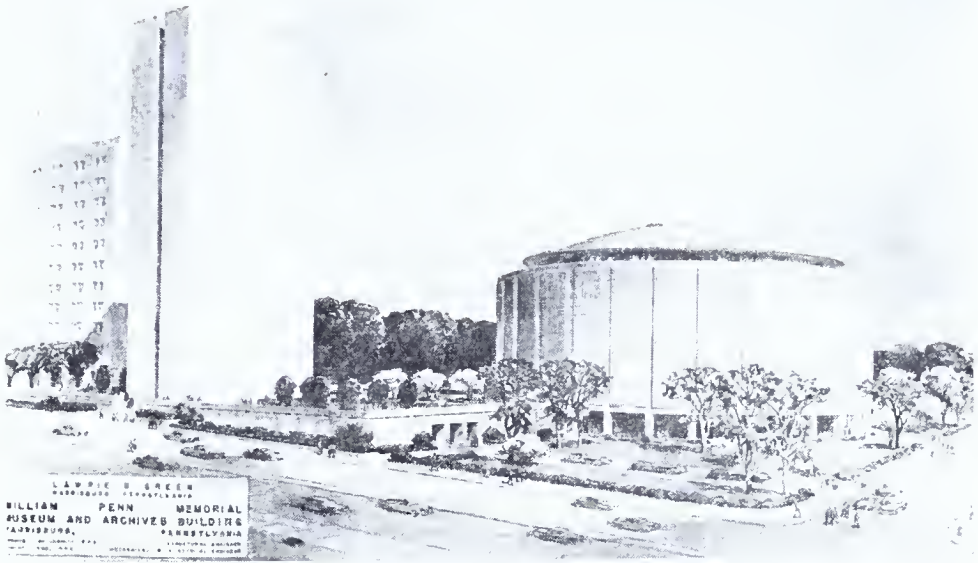
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The William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building from the north: an architect's drawing. The drawing on the cover is a view from the south.

GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES FOR THE WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES BUILDING

January 23, 1962

John J. Lynam, Executive Director of the General State Authority, presided over the ceremonies held at 11 A. M., January 23, 1962, to break ground for the William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building in the area north of the State Capitol in Harrisburg between North and Forster Streets. A small crowd of State officials, of representatives of leading historical organizations, and of employees and friends of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, gathered to witness the first step in the construction of the building which will be the center of the Commonwealth's historical, museum, and archives activities. In keeping with its character as a memorial to the great Quaker Founder of Pennsylvania, Richmond P. Miller, secretary of the Friends

William Penn Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends, gave the invocation:

May we never forget, as we walk these historic civic premises, that we are here to enlighten and enrich this Commonwealth and the world. We impoverish ourselves when we forget the high purpose that brings us together.

May Thy blessing rest on what we have entered upon this day. We do live in the present, with vision of the future, but may we build firmly upon the wisdom of our founding Father.

Give us courage to translate what William Penn termed "Holy Experiment" into demonstration and witness of divine democracy on earth, even as Thy kingdom in heaven.

The Honorable James B. Stevenson, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, spoke for the State's historical agency:

Mr. Lynam, Governor Lawrence, Fellow Pennsylvanians, and Friends:

We are here for a long-overdue event, breaking ground for a memorial to William Penn, the founder of this Commonwealth. Many other Pennsylvanians have their imposing memorials, but until the completion of this building, not William Penn. His will be something that will endure to serve the people for years far into the future—the William Penn Memorial and Archives Building.

Here we might well ask, what did Penn think of history? The answer is, in his own words: "As if the dead were returned to report to us the actions done in their time [giving us] a mighty view."

Penn was not the man that too many school books make him out to be, somewhat stuffy and goody-goody. He was a very human sort of fellow. Far from being the gloomy martyr sort, he was a person who had an

endearing air of eagerness about him. He disliked dry, long-winded talkers; he loved wit and was fond of jest; he was proud of Pennsylvania's well-fed settlers; he was just bald enough of pate to purchase four "hair borders" a year.

As for development of mind, he would have put most of us here to shame. He spoke Greek and Latin fluently and mastered Indian tongues. Learned, to be sure, but he was also a very tough man, accustomed to being hounded and heckled.

We of the Historical and Museum Commission have unwittingly followed Penn's track in more ways than we realized. For longer than 17 years our predecessor commissioners and staff, and the present commission and staff, employed—and here I quote Penn—"the use of persistence and diplomacy" in our efforts to raise a suitable memorial to this warm and noble Quaker. We believed, as Penn expressed it, that "it never hurts to have a friend in court." And in Harrisburg in recent years we have had some tried and true friends indeed.

We are here to break ground for a memorial to a man of amazing vision. Speaking of his colony, Penn said: "God . . . will, I believe, make it the seed of a nation."

"The seed of a nation"—spoken 100 years before this land became a nation. Can anyone today describe Pennsylvania more accurately—the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution?

On this happy and memorable occasion it is especially gratifying to all members of the Historical and Museum Commission that ground will be broken for the William Penn Memorial Museum in the Administration of a man who has done more for the history of Pittsburgh, for the history of my own western Pennsylvania, and more for the history of the entire Commonwealth than any governor before him, Governor David L. Lawrence. It is certain that this memorial to liberty,

freedom of religion, culture, and education will go down in history as one of the many great accomplishments of an outstanding governor.



Governor David L. Lawrence holds the symbolic shovel, aided by James B. Stevenson, Chairman, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; and Samuel C. Slaymaker, President, Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies. Others in the group, from left to right, include the Hon. Genevieve Blatt, Secretary of Internal Affairs; Richmond P. Miller, Secretary, Friends William Penn Committee; State Representative Norman Wood and State Senator Leroy Chapman, legislative members of the Commission; John G. Carney, member of the Commission; and Dr. Sylvester K. Stevens, Executive Director of the Commission.

The Honorable David L. Lawrence, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, emphasized the significance of his symbolic turning of earth by the following words:

It is my privilege to join today with representatives of historical societies throughout Pennsylvania in breaking ground for the new William Penn Memorial Museum.

When it is completed, the Museum will become a living presentation of historic fact. As such it will become one of America's greatest tourist attractions.

I am deeply proud that work on this structure is beginning during my Administration as Governor. I shall look forward, with great anticipation, to the day when it is completed and opened to the public.

It seems strange that this building will mark the first genuine Statewide memorial to the man who devoted his life to the Holy Experiment that was this Commonwealth. Yet this is true. In a real sense, therefore, the people of Penn's Woods are today repaying a portion of their enormous debt to a great patriot and the father of their State.

In these completed buildings, Pennsylvania citizens will be able to see, for the first time, permanent displays of priceless historic documents. Until then, they must be kept—as they have been in the past—locked in vaults for safekeeping.

We are doing more than constructing a great museum and archives building here. We are giving Pennsylvania's history back to the people, where it belongs. We are creating totally new educational frontiers in the study of history. We are dramatizing the importance of Pennsylvania's great traditions.

Just as important as all of these is the fact that we are making a sound, practical investment in the future economy of this region and our entire State.

American historic shrines are at the top of the list among tourist and travel attractions. Since the travel industry now ranks as one of the State's leading sources of income, producing more revenue each year than mining and agriculture combined, the new Penn Memorial Museum will add immeasurably to Pennsylvania's economy in the years to come.

No one would have approved of this project more heartily than William Penn himself, for he was a man who believed deeply and reverently in the future of mankind and the intelligent use of resources.

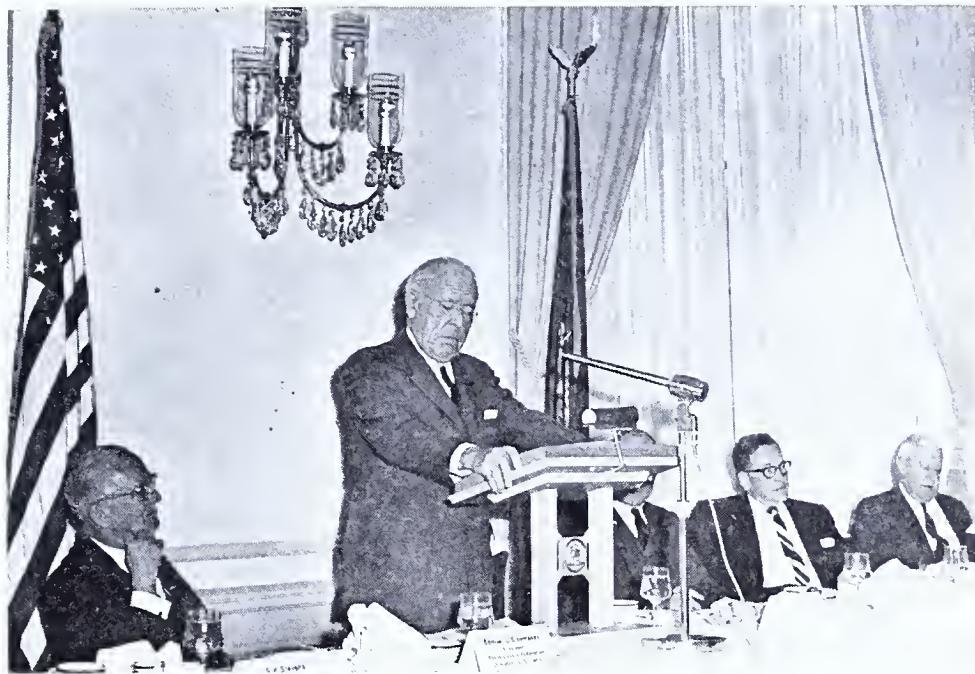
William Penn was a strong advocate of conservation. He knew that, to remain strong, we must conserve and use wisely all that which is best in our democracy.

He would have included in those resources, the useful traditions and lessons of the past.

Thereafter, Governor Lawrence vigorously dug the first shovelful of earth, and was followed by Chairman Stevenson, Dr. S. K. Stevens, Executive Director of the Commission, and many others eager to show their interest and gratification at this commencement of the building memorializing William Penn and enriching the historical heritage of the Commonwealth which he founded.



Representative Norman Wood, Dr. Stevens, and Federation President Slaymaker.



Governor David L. Lawrence addresses the luncheon of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies. On his right is Federation President Samuel C. Slaymaker, and on his left are James B. Stevenson, Chairman, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; John J. Lynam, Executive Director, General State Authority; and Dr. R. N. Williams, 2nd, Director, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

LUNCHEON OF THE PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES FOR THE WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES BUILDING

The Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, which unites the interests of one hundred and fourteen private historical organizations of the State, held a luncheon at the Penn-Harris Hotel in Harrisburg after the ceremonies of ground-breaking for the William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building, in order to celebrate and signalize this important milestone in Pennsylvania's historical activities. Samuel C. Slaymaker, the President of the Federation, presided at the luncheon. As an invocation Richmond P. Miller, secretary of the Friends William Penn Committee, adapted William Penn's Prayer for Philadelphia, written in a letter of 1684, to this occasion in 1961:

And Thou, Pennsylvania, what love, what care, what service, and what travail have there been to bring thee forth and preserve thee from such as would abuse and defile thee!

Oh that thou mayst be kept from the evil that would overwhelm thee; that faithful to the God of thy mercies, in the life of righteousness, thou mayst be preserved to the end! My soul prays to God for thee, that thou mayst stand firm in the day of trial.

My love to thee has been great and the remembrance of thee affects my heart and mine eye. The God of eternal strength keep and preserve thee to his glory and thy peace.

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee Peace, Courage, and High Design, both now and forevermore.

President Slaymaker introduced Dr. S. K. Stevens, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, as the honored guest by reason of his success in the long effort to achieve the William Penn Memorial, and asked him to introduce the distinguished guests from the legislative halls, government departments, and the historical field who had shared in this effort and now joined in celebrating its success. Mr. Slaymaker then introduced John J. Lynam, Executive Director of the General State Authority, for similar recognition of his staff and of the architects and contractors. Finally, President Slaymaker himself spoke to emphasize the significance of this occasion:

I understand that President Kennedy has delayed the launching of a man into outer space because he had word of what was going on in Harrisburg today. He was warned that Dr. Stevens would probably be in orbit also today and did not wish to create confusion by having two men in space on the same day. In view of the years of effort he has put into securing this building, I think Steve probably is "in orbit" just about now.

Seriously, I know all of you here are delighted in breaking ground for this new and wonderful William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building. All these years Pennsylvania has gone without any memorial of even the simplest type at its State Capital to honor its founder. We had a monument for Boies Penrose and General Hartranft but nothing for our Quaker Founder. The peak of something or other was reached a few years ago when, as part of the Christmas decorations at the Capitol, a reproduction of the Nativity scene was placed at the foot of the Penrose statue on the Capital grounds. Some of my fellow Republicans thought that Penrose had achieved sainthood.

As most of you know the idea for a building memorializing Penn originated in connection with the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Penn's birth in 1944. Some people thought this should be a formal and decorative building much like the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. More practical views prevailed. Steve and others suggested that a building which would provide Pennsylvania with a proper State Museum and a place to house its priceless historical and archival treasures would be more appropriate and fitting. Penn was himself a simple man and indeed the Quaker beliefs frown upon statues and portraits glorifying the individual as such.

In 1945 in the administration of Governor Martin, who heartily approved the idea, a bill providing for such a building in the Capitol Park Extension was approved by the General Assembly. I might add that Senator M. Harvey Taylor was an angel back of this bill in the legislature and helped greatly in its passage. I might also add that General Martin regrets greatly his inability to be with us today. We wanted him here to honor him for what he started seventeen years ago.

Much could be said about the further history of the project. Governor Martin made some funds available.

but Governor Duff shifted them to other uses, partly because the land where the building was to be constructed was not yet cleared of private buildings.

The project was revived under Governor Leader. It has come to fruition under Governor Lawrence. We have so many friends in the Assembly to thank for their help it is impossible to name all of them. As a Lancasterian, I am happy that Norm Wood and Ed Kessler can be counted among the leaders in the cause. Speaker Andrews and men like Representative Bower, along with many others, some of whom are here, gave support to the idea that our Commonwealth deserved such a building. Our Federation, the Pennsylvania Historical Association, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and many other historical, cultural, and patriotic organizations helped as well.

We celebrate today because this is one of the truly great days in the history of museum and historical accomplishment in Pennsylvania. This building will literally revolutionize our work in these fields. The new State Museum will become a fountainhead of museum work in the Commonwealth. It will give Pennsylvania the finest State Museum in the United States. It will become a center from which there will radiate out to the schools all over the Commonwealth traveling exhibits. It will attract to Harrisburg thousands of school children. It will become a mecca for the tourist visiting Pennsylvania and thus will mean a major addition to the historical and museum attractions of our Commonwealth.

All of us and many other people are interested and fascinated by history. However, the impact of our realization today goes far beyond the field of history for history's sake. It is our duty and responsibility to indoctrinate in the minds and hearts of the young generation not only the understanding of history but the commit-

ments of carrying forward as individuals the heritage of the past. In our world today and through the future we must cope with Communism and ideologies which would impair and possibly destroy our American way of life. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, our children, and grandchildren to become ancestors of the future and not rest upon laurels as descendants of the past. This expression has been used before. I first heard it at Penn State two years ago. It expresses with such validity our true philosophy that I can't refrain again from using it.

Pennsylvania has never had a central depository for its historical and archival treasures, and no State has more or is richer in these values than our Commonwealth. The archives and historical section of this great building will change all of this. It is impossible actually to imagine all that this building means to the future of the fields of work in which those of us here today are interested.

I could go on forever, but Governor Lawrence is with us and I want to present to you the man who finally made this building possible. Governor Lawrence, we look upon you as having revolutionized historical activity in Pennsylvania. Your support of the great work of the Historical and Museum Commission in preserving the heritage of our State has made it the outstanding commission of its type in the entire country. Your support, as an Administration measure, of the new legislation which will permit the creating by local governments of Historic Districts to protect historic buildings from destruction is a landmark of its kind in the United States. Your addresses all over Pennsylvania have turned attention time and again to historical values which are ours and to the need to protect and to preserve them for the future. Governor, we salute you for all of these deeds which have made you

among all Governors the most outstanding in helping Pennsylvania history.

President Slaymaker's concluding words served as a cordial introduction to Governor David L. Lawrence, who next addressed the gathering:

As most of you are well aware, prophecy is among the most perilous of experiments. Being a healthy respecter of this rule, I seldom hazard guesses or make predictions about things to come.

Not too many weeks ago, however, I did break the rule when I talked with members of the Dauphin County Historical Society. We were meeting at the historic John Harris Mansion down on Front Street and I told the Society at that time that we hoped to break ground for the new William Penn Memorial Museum in "about three months."

Just to be on the safe side, of course, I qualified the prediction by saying this could happen only if everything went well.

That was on October 16—and here we are, today; everything has gone well; the ground is broken and those words of mine are made to seem more than an educated guess—they are downright foolproof.

Having established this remarkable reputation for prophecy, I think I shall retire while I am ahead.

The fact is, of course, that we are able to be here today, celebrating this occasion only because a number of people have worked very hard to make it possible. I want to express the gratitude of Pennsylvania's citizens for their efforts.

Neither should we forget, at this point, that the support of Pennsylvania's historical societies has played an important part in this achievement. For many long years, now, citizens who felt the need for a decent, attractive memorial to our past heritage have been

patiently working toward the goal we now have within our grasp.

Without that support, State Government could not have undertaken this project. The William Penn Memorial Museum and the Archives, when completed in 1964, will be genuinely the product of an enlightened and loyal cooperation between government agencies and private citizen groups. It will be all the more satisfying to those who use it because of that partnership of interest and activity.

I am deeply grateful that this project—after long delay—has had its beginning in my Administration.

I shall watch its progress with pride and pleasure in the months to come—and I know that every citizen of this Commonwealth who shares, with me, a love of Pennsylvania history, will do the same.

The William Penn Memorial Museum is far more than a mere building. Within its rooms, our people and the people of this entire nation, will see the proud march of American democracy before their eyes.

It can be—and it will be—the hub of historical understanding and appreciation for American citizens. It will be one of this country's greatest historical education centers—and, as such, one of Pennsylvania's biggest tourist attractions. It will have tremendous economic value for Harrisburg, naturally, but its economic impact, I feel confident, will spread far beyond this area into every region of our State.

Those who visit the new Museum from beyond our borders will not want to leave Pennsylvania without seeking, at first hand, the greatest accumulation of historic landmarks to be found in any single state in the union.

Pennsylvania has always been, truly, the cradle of our democracy. From Independence Hall and Valley Forge, from Gettysburg Battlefield and Fort Necessity and Fort Duquesne, from Pennsbury Manor and

Wheatland, we have preserved the physical evidence of this country's magnificent past.

These things—and many more—are here, in Pennsylvania, for those who take the time to visit them and gain understanding from them.

I believe that there is a great rebirth of genuine patriotism moving in our country today. It is born not of extremism or emotionalism. It has come from a growing love and respect for the greatness of our past and an increasing understanding of the lessons we can learn from it.

Here in Pennsylvania, the William Penn Memorial Museum will play an important and enduring part in the creation of a new spirit of devotion to liberty and a new determination to reach the heights of achievement our ancestors envisioned for the American people.

It is with great pleasure that I join with you today in celebrating the auspicious beginning of the Museum's construction.



The William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building begins to take shape, August, 1962.



